

March 23, 2009

Chairman Don McLeroy
Texas State Board of Education
9277 Brookwater Circle
College Station, TX 77845

Dear Chairman McLeroy:

We, members of the Texas scientific community, in collaboration with the American Association for the Advancement of Science, encourage you as a member of the State Board of Education to oppose amendments to the draft state science standards that would harm the teaching of science in Texas.

Certain amendments introduced and approved during the January 2009 board meeting would mislead students should they make it into the final standards. For example, an amendment to Biology Section 7 attacks the foundational concept of common ancestry, and revisions to the Earth and Space Science standards introduce unwarranted uncertainty to long-settled scientific issues. These amendments serve only to undermine sound science education in Texas. We would be happy to provide more details on these points.

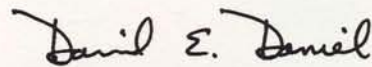
In rejecting the insertion of language that speaks of the "weaknesses" of evolution into the standards, the Board did the students of Texas a great service. The scientific consensus is that evolution is the backbone of modern biology and many other fields of science, underlying advances in areas such as agriculture and medicine. Downplaying its place in science only serves to confuse students.

Students exposed to a strong science curriculum will undoubtedly be better prepared to compete for high-skill jobs in an increasingly high-tech world economy. We urge you to vote for removing anti-science changes to the draft standards and protect the future of science education and technology-based industry in Texas. Please feel free to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

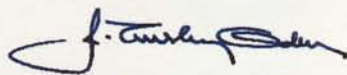
Sincerely,



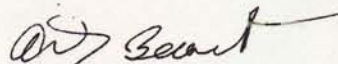
Alan I. Leshner
Chief Executive Officer
AAAS



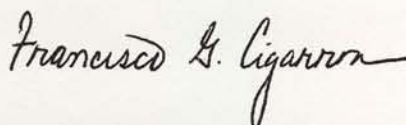
David E. Daniel, Ph.D.
2009 TAMEST President
President, University of Texas at Dallas




J. Tinsley Oden, Ph.D.
2009 TAMEST Past President
Associate Vice President for Research and
Director of ICES
The University of Texas at Austin



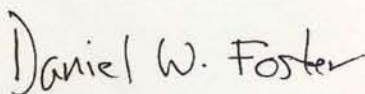
Arthur L. Beaudet, M.D.
TAMEST Board Member
Professor and Chairman
Department of Molecular and Human Genetics
Baylor College of Medicine



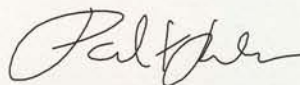
Francisco G. Cigarroa, M.D.
2009 TAMEST Vice President
Chancellor
University of Texas System



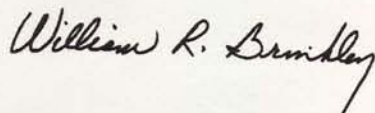
Mr. Kenneth E. Arnold, P.E.
TAMEST Board Member
President
K. Arnold Consulting, Inc.



Daniel W. Foster, M.D.
2007 TAMEST President
John Denis McGarry, Ph.D. Distinguished
Chair in Diabetes and Metabolic Research
The University of Texas Southwestern
Medical Center at Dallas



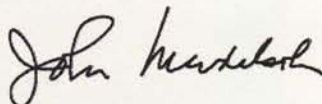
Paul F. Barbara, Ph.D.
TAMEST Board Member
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in Chemistry
The University of Texas at Austin



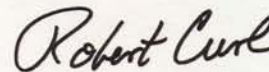
William R. Brinkley, Ph.D.
2009 TAMEST Secretary
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Senior Vice President for Graduate Sciences
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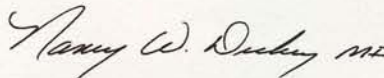
Allen J. Bard, Ph.D.
Norman Hackerman/Welch Regents' Chair
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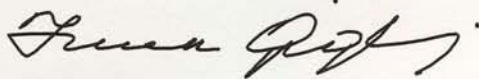
John Mendelsohn, M.D.
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The University of Texas M.D. Anderson
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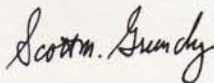
Robert F. Curl, Ph.D.
Nobel Laureate
Kenneth S. Pitzer-Schlumberger Professor
of Natural Science Emeritus
Rice University



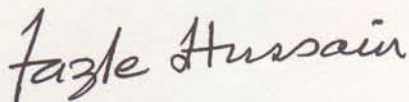
Nancy W. Dickey, M.D.
TAMEST Board Member
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Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs
Texas A&M System



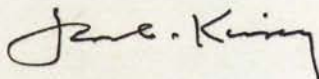
Irma Gigli, M.D.
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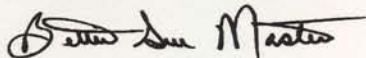
Scott M. Grundy, M.D., Ph.D.
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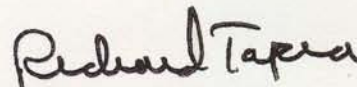
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The University of Texas at Austin



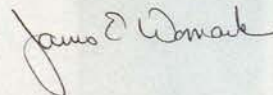
Kenneth I. Shine, M.D.
Executive Vice Chancellor for Health
Affairs
The University of Texas System



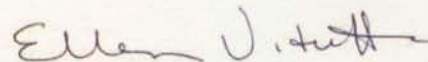
Max D. Summers, Ph.D.
TAMEST Board Member
Distinguished Professor, Endowed Chair in
Agricultural Biotechnology
Texas A&M University



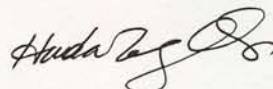
Richard A. Tapia, Ph.D.
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University Professor and Maxfield-Oshman
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Baylor College of Medicine
Investigator
Howard Hughes Medical Institute